

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 4, 2013
12:15 p.m.
President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Dan Taylor (chair), Candi Clemenz, Rebecca Funk, Mark Owczarski for Larry Hincker, Lance Jones, Tamara Knott, Kim O'Rourke, Durelle Scott, Jay Tucker, Eric Wininger

Absent Janice Austin, Terry Cobb, Bill Green, Jason Holliday (with notice), Sarah Karpanty, Joe Merola, Jacqueline Nottingham (with notice), Jean-Luc Pierre Ford, Anthony Watson, Diane Zahm

Guests: Kevin Ayoub, Bo Frazier, Natalie Hart, Captain Vince Houston, Mike Mulhare, Margie Murray, April Myers, Pam Vickers, Lise Visser, Michael Weaver, Kenneth Wong, Laura Wedin,

Dr. Taylor called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.

Approval of May 1, 2013, minutes

Taylor announced that the minutes of May 1, 2013, have been voted on and approved electronically.

Introductions

Introductions were made so that everyone could become familiar with each other.

Debriefing of Spring Ceremonies

Taylor presented a few suggestions made by Jacqueline Nottingham (Director of Processions) since she was unable to attend the meeting.

1. Adding more signage in the parking lot where the graduates line up for the University ceremony.
2. Changing the seating locations for some of the colleges on the field to allow all colleges to sit on the same side.
3. Having water available on the field for the graduates due to the intense heat.

Vickers mentioned that there was a backup at the gate closest to Cassell Coliseum because the ushers did not permit guests in wheelchairs to enter through that gate and were sending them to gate one. Vickers indicated that it is too far to go to gate one especially in a wheelchair.

Murray suggested that the lounges on the west side of the stadium could be used for accessible seating. One possible issue with this is that the windows do not open so there may not be any sound in the lounges. There is a possibility that the televisions can be turned on and would have sound, but that will have to be determined. Scott indicated that he was working as an usher at the top of the South End Zone, and it was very hot especially for those in wheelchairs.

Hart indicated that there were several guests trying to enter the 4th floor on the west side in order to get out of the heat.

A suggestion was made to include a diagram in the Commencement program of where each college is seated on the field. This will help ushers to have easy access to this information. Murray indicated that the number of graduates in each college will have to be determined at least six to eight weeks prior to the ceremony in order to include the college seating diagram in the program. O'Rourke stated that the seating diagram can be included in the program but there needs to be a disclaimer that it is subject to change.

Murray questioned if the additional ceremony on Friday at 5:00 p.m. interfered with the Corps Commissioning ceremony. Weaver indicated that it seemed to go okay and that the Corps members attending the ceremony prior to the Commissioning ceremony had their uniform on underneath their regalia so that they would not have to get dressed between ceremonies. Weaver will double check and get back to Murray if there were any issues.

Planning for Fall ceremonies

As of this time, there was nothing to report about planning for the fall ceremonies.

Videotaping and live streaming the National Capital Region Spring Ceremony

Dr. Kenneth Wong from the National Capital Region (NCR) requested assistance with determining how to proceed with videotaping and live streaming the NCR ceremony. The video would be used for publicity purposes and as an archival record of the event. Last year a personal camera was used to videotape the ceremony. The quality of the recording was poor, and there is no capacity to edit the video.

Owczarski indicated that the Blacksburg campus has an advantage of having a video production team, and the Athletics Department has contractual arrangements with large broadcasting companies. This allows the Commencement ceremonies to be streamed live and videotaped at no additional charge. It would be extremely difficult to transport a video team from Blacksburg to the National Capital Region. The broadcast team in Blacksburg begins setting up on Thursday for the ceremonies in Blacksburg on Friday and Saturday. It would be a challenge to travel to Northern Virginia and get everything ready to film the NCR ceremony by Sunday with all that has to be done in Blacksburg. Wong indicated that estimates received to get an outside video production team range from \$3000 to \$5500. Owczarski suggested that some research should be done to determine what equipment is available on the NCR venue and what the return on the investment will be for live streaming and videotaping the ceremonies. Owczarski will contact the appropriate individuals to get statistics on how many people viewed the live streaming of the Blacksburg ceremonies and statistics on uses of archived Commencement videos.

Announcement

Taylor announced that the October 2, 2013, meeting will most likely be cancelled. This will be confirmed later this month.

With no other business, Clemenz moved to adjourn at 12:51 p.m.